



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

July 9, 2015

M-15-17

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Shaun Donovan
Director
Office of Management and Budget

Cecilia Muñoz
Director
Domestic Policy Council

SUBJECT: Native Youth Priorities for the FY 2017 Budget

Last summer, the President and First Lady took a historic trip to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, where they had an opportunity to hear directly from Native youth who described the challenges in their families and communities with substance and alcohol abuse, homelessness, suicide, and health issues, among others. The President was deeply moved by the stories he heard, and he knows that they are not isolated to Standing Rock. But he was also inspired by the talent and courage of the Native youth he met to overcome their circumstances. Motivated by this experience, the White House launched Generation Indigenous, or "Gen-I", an initiative that takes a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to help improve the lives of, and opportunities for, Native youth. Native youth are the future of Indian country. They are essential to reaching the vision of strong, resilient, prosperous tribal nations. This is the critical time to partner with tribal nations and invest in the success of all our youth.

Federal government funding for, and coordination around, programs that support Native youth is an essential aspect of Gen-I. Key to this goal is that complementary programs are working together to ensure that Native youth have what they need to thrive. Given the complexity and magnitude of the challenges, there is a need for a broad array of programs and partners to support tribes in identifying solutions to help Native youth reach their potential. Agencies committed to working on issues of poverty, health, juvenile justice, educational inequality, and student opportunities can play an important role in improving the lives of Native youth.

This memorandum outlines the Administration's multi-agency Native youth priorities for formulating FY 2017 Budget submissions to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The priorities covered in this memo support Native youth through activities such as tribal capacity-building, youth engagement, promotion of tribal self-determination, measurement of success, and cooperation among multiple Federal agencies. They build on priorities reflected in this Administration's past Budgets.

While the Administration has made progress on various fronts, there remains a clear need for agencies to better communicate and coordinate during the budget formulation process as agency budget submissions to OMB are being developed. Thus, we are asking agencies to clearly label the sections of their budget submissions that address the priorities described below. Agencies should work on an iterative basis with their respective OMB Examiners to ensure investments are aligned across the government during the budget planning process so that resources are coordinated to maximize their impact and to avoid inappropriate duplication, and include summaries of these discussions in their OMB budget submissions. Agency proposals that are aligned with multi-agency Native youth priorities and demonstrate meaningful interagency coordination are more likely to be prioritized in FY 2017 Budget deliberations.

Multi-agency Native youth priorities

Native children are far more likely than their non-Native peers to face systemic and multiple challenges in the areas of health, education, poverty, and economic opportunities. While agencies should balance priorities to ensure resources are adequately allocated for agency-specific, mission-driven programs, addressing the challenges that face Native communities may require holistic approaches that cut across traditional agency and programmatic focus and that are guided by evidence to invest in what works. As every challenge cannot be addressed at once, agencies should focus resources, where appropriate, on the following discreet outcome goals that cannot be addressed effectively by a single agency.

- Improve Educational Outcomes and Life Outcomes for Native Youth. Education is a key component to improve the life trajectories of Native youth and ultimately rebuild strong tribal nations. The American Indian/Alaskan Native high school graduation rate is 68 percent, tied for the lowest rate of any racial/ethnic demographic and far below the national average of 81 percent.¹ And the most recent Department of Education data indicate that the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools fare even worse, with a graduation rate of 53 percent.² As a Federal school system, agencies have a primary responsibility to ensure students at BIE schools are receiving a culturally appropriate and world class education. *Agencies should give priority to programs that advance the educational outcomes for Native youth, including through in-school activities such as enrichment programs, expanded curriculum, and cultural education as well as out-of-school activities that address barriers to educational success. Because Native children are far more likely than their non-Native peers to face systemic and several challenges in the areas of health, poverty, and economic opportunities, agencies should also prioritize efforts to support Native communities to identify key barriers to improving educational and life outcomes for Native youth and implement locally produced strategies to address those barriers.*
- Increase Access to Quality Teacher Housing. In order for tribes and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to attract and retain high-quality teachers in Indian country, *agencies should support improving the availability and physical condition of teacher housing.*

¹ See U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Public High School Graduation Rates*. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coi.asp.

² See U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010-11 and 2011-12*, by Marie C. Stetser and Robert Stillwell, NCES 2014-39 (2014). <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014391.pdf>.

- Improve Access to the Internet. Access to high-speed broadband and adequate learning facilities are key to student learning and success. A 21st century education system is not possible without the tools available to the rest of America's educational systems, and American Indians and Alaska Natives should be included in any efforts to connect America and improve infrastructure. The Nation is undergoing unprecedented developments in education with the adoption and implementation of rigorous college and career-ready standards and "next generation" assessments aligned to those standards. That implementation requires a certain threshold of bandwidth, which currently many of the 183 BIE-funded schools do not meet. Until Internet connectivity is upgraded to allow schools to take online assessments, BIE funded schools will use alternative methods that are less efficient. Increased broadband, in particular, will allow real-time delivery of professional development training for teachers and administrators and distance learning courses for students. In addition, a collateral benefit of the investment in broadband for American Indian and Alaska Native communities where BIE-funded schools are located is the increase in access to enrichment activities, such as increased after-school, evening, and weekend opportunities for students and community members for the completion of homework, remedial, self-enrichment, extra-curricular activities, and to explore or attend college classes. *Agencies should participate in the coordination efforts to ensure adequate Internet access in Indian Country, in particular at BIE-run schools.*
- Support the Implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is a federal law that seeks to keep American Indian children with American Indian families. Congress passed ICWA in 1978 in response to the alarmingly high number of Indian children being removed from their homes by both public and private agencies. The intent of Congress under ICWA was to "protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families" (25 U.S.C. § 1902). The implementation of ICWA requires support for tribal and state courts, social workers and foster care. ICWA also calls for services that keep families together. These could be family assistance services, home improvement programs, alternatives to incarceration and employment support services. *Agencies should focus on programs that support the capacity building and programmatic support necessary to implement ICWA.*
- Reduce Teen Suicide. Federal agencies have developed myriad workforce and training activities, tele-health resources, and programs to promote and support suicide prevention in tribal communities. Despite important investments, key challenges remain, including ensuring a well-prepared behavioral health workforce and access to behavioral health services in Native communities. Suicide is the second leading cause of death—2.5 times the national rate—for Native youth in the 15 to 24 year old age group.³ Mental and substance use disorders are also major concerns within the Native youth population. Among U.S. adolescents ages 12 to 17, Native youth have the highest lifetime prevalence of major depressive episodes.⁴ Native children are also 70 percent more likely to be identified in

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services. Administrator Pamela Hyde, "Behavioral Health and Tribal Communities." Presentation at the National Indian Education Association's 14th Annual Legislative Summit, Washington, D.C., February 8, 2011. <http://www.store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA11-PHYDE020811/SMA11-PHYDE020811.pdf>.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services. Spero M. Manson, "Culturally Appropriate Strategies for Prevention-Based Work in Tribal Communities." Presentation

school as students with an emotional disturbance.⁵ The education system is particularly impacted by mental health disorders, as more Native youth ages 12 to 17 used mental health services in education versus other settings, requiring resource-intensive coordination between schools and service providers.⁶ *Agencies should prioritize programs and coordinate where appropriate to support students' physical, emotional, and social needs in a culturally-sensitive manner, which is critical for each child to truly succeed as a student and, more importantly, as a human being.*

- Increase Tribal Control of Criminal Justice. Tribal nations are in the best position to address the unique needs of their communities. Research identifies tribal self-determination as a strategy that has improved the well-being of American Indians and Alaska Natives across many areas of government service.⁷ Increasing tribal control is also likely to lead to greater development of culturally based solutions that respect tribal law and the priorities of the community. *Agencies should give priority to investments that give tribes the tools they need to establish and maintain effective justice systems.*

for the Enhancing State Prevention Systems for Children & Youth: National Webinar Series, August 21, 2013. http://www.nasmhpd.org/docs/Webinars%20ppts/Culturally%20Appropriate_Tribal%20webinar%2008.21.2013.pdf.

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, *My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report to the President* (2014). http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf.

⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, ICPSR 34933 (2012). <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR34933.v2>.

⁷ “[F]ederal promotion of tribal self-government under formal policies known as ‘self-determination’ is turning out to be, after a century or more of failed efforts to improve the lives of the U.S. indigenous people, the only strategy that has worked.” Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt, *American Indian Self-Determination: The Political Economy of a Policy that Works*. Working Paper No. RWP10-043, at 15. Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2010.

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4553307>.